



Australian Bureau of Statistics

6226.0.00.001 - Microdata: Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia, 2019

Previous ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 08/07/2019

Summary

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

This product provides a range of information about the release of microdata from the 2015 to 2019 Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJSM) surveys, including details about the survey methodology and how to use the microdata product; TableBuilder. A data item list and information on the conditions of use and the quality of the microdata are also provided. A TableBuilder is an online tool for creating tables and graphs.

Microdata are the most detailed information available from a survey and are generally the responses to individual questions on the questionnaire or data derived from two or more questions.

The PJSM survey is conducted in February throughout Australia and is designed to provide statistics on the following broad labour market issues - labour force participation potential, underemployment and marginal attachment, as well as job search experience and labour mobility. This information can be cross classified by characteristics such as duration of job search, last job details, hours worked, educational attainment, industry and occupation as well as personal characteristics.

Further information about this product, and other information to assist users in understanding and accessing microdata in general, is available from the Microdata Entry Page. Before applying for access, users should read and familiarise themselves with the information contained in the User Manual: TableBuilder.

APPLYING FOR ACCESS

To apply for access to TableBuilder, register and apply in Registration Centre.

Further information on access steps can be found in How to Apply for Microdata on the ABS website.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about the survey and the microdata can be found in the various pages associated with this product, including:

- A detailed list of data items for the PJSM TableBuilder, available in the Downloads tab.
- The Quality Declaration in the Explanatory Notes tab.
- Other related products on the Related Information tab.

SUPPORT

For further support in the use of this product, please contact Microdata Access Strategies on 02 6252 7714 or via microdata.access@abs.gov.au.

DATA AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Data collected in the survey but not included in TableBuilder may be available from the ABS, on request, as statistics in tabulated form.

Subject to confidentiality and sampling variability constraints, special tabulations can be produced incorporating data items, populations and geographic areas selected to meet individual requirements. These are available, on request, on a fee for service basis. Contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or client.services@abs.gov.au for further information.

PRIVACY

The ABS Privacy Policy outlines how the ABS handles any personal information that you provide to us.

Changes this release

CHANGES THIS RELEASE

Five years - 2015 to 2019

For the first time, five years of microdata from the Participation, Job Search and Mobility Survey (PJSM) are available in TableBuilder, covering the period 2015 to 2019.

For comparison purposes, the previous TableBuilder release of 2016 to 2018 microdata also remains available.

For more information see About TableBuilder.

Regular rebenchmarking

From 2018, the PJSM microdata are now rebenchmarked every year to reflect the most recently available release of Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data.

The microdata weights have been revised to incorporate the latest benchmarks. All data from 2015 to 2019 are comparable with estimates published in the March 2019 issue of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0).

Trend factor adjustments

To reduce the impact of seasonal and irregular effects on total employment and unemployment, the benchmarks have been adjusted by factors based on trend Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates (as published in March 2019).

For example, the unemployment estimates collected in February have a typical seasonal pattern of higher estimates. The factors applied result in a decrease to the estimates for the total number of unemployed to match trend LFS estimates.

From this release, trend factors have also been applied to underemployed benchmarks, also based on the monthly LFS estimates published in March 2019.

For more information refer to the Explanatory Notes (cat. no. 6226.0).

Population Groups

The population groups for 2015 to 2019 have been reconciled to match for the entire period. The definition of population groups provided in the latest Data Item List (available from Downloads) supersede any previously published population groups and obsoletes any previously published concordance tables.

Three new population groups have been added to the list:

- Population 5: Part-time workers who would prefer full-time hours
- Population 16: Persons who left, lost or worked multiple jobs last year
- Population 24: Persons Not in the Labour Force (PNILF) who had a job to go or return to

Population groups that relate to marginal attachment (Populations 23–27) have been updated to include or exclude those who had a job to go or return to. This is consistent with the changes to the marginal attachment framework first published in 2018 (see Key Findings in the 2018 issue of cat. 6226.0)

Skill level of last job

The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) is a skill-based classification used to classify all occupations and jobs in the Australian and New Zealand labour markets.

In line with the ANZSCO, occupation data have been grouped by skill level alongside the standard major occupation groups, providing an alternative view on the nature of work.

Under this classification every occupation is assigned a skill level from 1 (high-skilled) to 5 (low-skilled) based on the range and complexity of the particular set of tasks performed in that job.

Data items relating to changes in skill level between the current and previous job are also available. More details are provided in the updated Data Item List, available from Downloads.

Revisions to Industry and Occupation

After a review of the industry and occupation data collected in PJSM since 2015, improvements have been made to the coding of responses relating to the occupation and industry of last job, the job last February, and changes in occupation while working for the same employer.

Subsequently, revisions have been made to the microdata in relation to the the industry and occupation data items. This results in improved industry and occupation estimates compared to the output from the previous microdata release.

Country of Birth

The Country of Birth data item has been updated to match the latest country names published in Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC), 2016 (cat. no. 1269.0).

The top 10 most populous countries of birth have also been updated to match the findings from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. Details of the change is provided in the updated Data Item List, available from Downloads

Relationship in Household

During the quality assurance of the publication Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families (cat. no. 6224.0.55.001), the ABS identified an issue with some family coding which affected a range of key family estimates - particularly during the period 2015 to 2018.

For this reason, data items relating to family characteristics have been removed from this release of PJSM microdata. The data items will be re-instated for the next release in 2020, which will include revised family characteristics for the period 2015-2019.

Townsville

Flooding in Townsville in February 2019 resulted in a major disruption to the operation of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the accompanying Participation, Job Search and Mobility Survey (PJSM). As a result, there was a very low sample of responding households in the region in February.

Given the severity of these disruptions, which affected almost the entire region, and to ensure that this loss of sample did not affect estimates for Australia and Queensland, the ABS imputed sample in Townsville for February 2019. The imputation drew upon previous information that had been collected from people in Townsville and matches the similarly imputed estimates published in LFS for February 2019.

When producing tables with geographic data, it should be noted that estimates for the Townsville region (SA4 318) are imputed in 2019 and are unlikely to be representative of the labour market at the time of the flood. Aggregated estimates for Rest of Queensland (GCCSA 3RQLD), Queensland (STT 3) and Australia in 2019 will also be marginally affected.

Survey methodology

General information about the Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJSM) survey, including summary results, are available in the publication Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia (cat. no. 6226.0).

Detailed information about the survey including scope and coverage, survey design, data collection methodology, weighting, estimation and benchmarking, estimate reliability and a glossary can be accessed from the Explanatory Notes page of the publication. All published summary tables, in Excel spreadsheet format, can be accessed from the Downloads page.

File structure and content

FILE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

FILE STRUCTURE

The underlying format of the Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJSM) TableBuilder file is structured at a single person level. This person level contains general demographic information such as age, sex and country of birth as well details about underemployed workers, persons not in the labour force, unemployed persons and educational qualifications.

When tabulating data from TableBuilder, person weights are automatically applied to the underlying sample counts to provide the survey's population estimates.

The data items included in the PJSM TableBuilder are grouped under broad headings and subheadings as shown in the image below. A complete data items list can be accessed from the Downloads tab.



FILE STRUCTURE

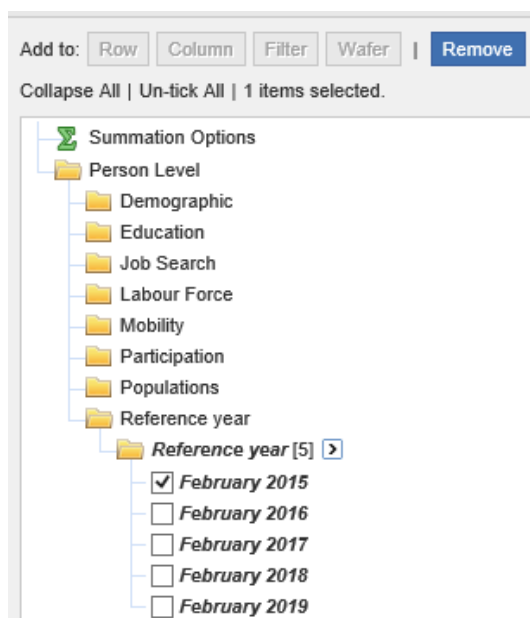
Reference Year

From 2017, the PJSM TableBuilder contains a mandatory field called Reference year to allow for historical analysis. By default this field will be present in any new table as per the image below:

Reference year	February 2015	February 2016	February 2017	February 2018	February 2019
	-	-	-	-	-

For further information see [About this data](#), [Data Confidentiality](#), [Relative Standard Error](#)
NOTE: Retrieve data to view table annotations.

Individual years can be removed from the table using the data item panel by selecting the required year and removing it from the table as per the image below:



However, at least one category (reference year) of the mandatory field must be present in a table for TableBuilder to retrieve data.

Not Applicable Categories

Most data items included in the TableBuilder file include a 'Not applicable' category. The classification values of these 'Not applicable' categories, where relevant, are shown in the data item list in the Downloads tab. The 'Not applicable' category generally represents the number of people who were not asked a particular question or the number of people excluded from the population for a data item when that data were derived (e.g. Hours usually worked in main job is not applicable for unemployed persons or persons not in the labour force).

Table Populations

The population relevant to each data item is identified in the data item list and should be kept in mind when extracting and analysing data. The actual population count for each data item is equal to the total cumulative frequency minus the 'Not applicable' category.

Generally, some populations can be 'filtered' using other relevant data items. For example, if the population of interest is 'Employed', any data item with that population (excluding the 'Not applicable' category) could be used.

Zero Value Cells

Tables generated from sample surveys will sometimes contain cells with zero values because no respondents that satisfied the parameters of a particular cell in a table were in the survey. This is despite there being people in the general population with those characteristics. This is an example of sampling variability which occurs with all sample surveys. Relative Standard Errors cannot be generated for zero cells.

Using TableBuilder

USING TABLEBUILDER

For general information relating to the TableBuilder or instructions on how to use features of the TableBuilder product, please refer to the User Manual: TableBuilder (cat. no. 1406.0.55.005).

More specific information applicable to the Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJSM) survey TableBuilder, which should enable users to understand, interpret and tabulate the data, is outlined below.

CONFIDENTIALITY FEATURES IN TABLEBUILDER

In accordance with the Census and Statistics Act 1905, all the data in TableBuilder are subjected to a confidentiality process before release. This confidentiality process is undertaken to avoid releasing information that may allow the identification of particular individuals, families, households, dwellings or businesses.

Processes used in TableBuilder to confidentialise records include the following:

- perturbation of data; and
- table suppression

Perturbation Effects

To minimise the risk of identifying individuals in aggregate statistics, a technique is used to randomly adjust cell values. This technique is called perturbation. Perturbation involves small random adjustments of the statistics and is considered the most satisfactory technique for avoiding the release of identifiable statistics while maximising the range of information that can be released. These adjustments have a negligible impact on the underlying pattern of the statistics.

The introduction of these random adjustments result in tables not adding up. As a result, randomly adjusted individual cells will be consistent across tables, but the totals in any table will not be the sum of the individual cell values. The size of the difference between summed cells and the relevant total will generally be very small.

Please be aware that the effects of perturbing the data may result in components being larger than their totals. This includes determining proportions.

Table suppression

Some tables generated within TableBuilder may contain a substantial proportion of very low counts within cells (excluding cells that have counts of zero). When this occurs, all values within the table are suppressed in order to preserve confidentiality. The following error message below is displayed (in red) at the bottom of the table when table suppression has occurred.

ERROR: The table has been suppressed as it is too sparse
ERROR: table cell values have been suppressed

COUNTING UNITS AND WEIGHTS

Weighting is the process of adjusting results from a sample survey to infer results for the total population. To do this, a 'weight' is allocated to each record. The weight is the value that indicates how many population units are represented by each sample unit.

To produce estimates for the in-scope population you must use a weight field in your tables. In TableBuilder they can be found under the Summation Options category in the left hand pane under the applicable level. If you do not select a weight field, TableBuilder will apply 'Person weight' by default. This will give you estimates of the number of persons.

If you are estimating the number of persons with certain characteristics (e.g. 'Number of non-school qualifications completed') the weight listed under the category heading 'Person level weighting' must be used.

When creating a table a default Summation Item will need to be the Reference year as this item will provide data for the relevant year. This item will then be used for time-series purposes as future data becomes available.

SELECTING DATA ITEMS FOR CROSS-TABULATION

The Person level contains a range of data items detailing the characteristics of the respondent including PJSM, demographic, education, labour force and population variables.

Populations and Data items

When adding a data item to a table, an associated population should also be used to ensure correct data is retrieved from TableBuilder. For example, the data item All reasons for looking for other work while still employed is only applicable to **Population 12 - Persons who looked for work while in their current job over the last year** (as per the image below), so when using this item in a table only that population should be used.

Job Search	
Data item label and categories	Populations
All reasons for looking for other work while still employed	12
10 Wanted a change	
11 Wanted better pay	
12 Wanted better conditions/flexibility/work life balance	
13 Wanted more hours	
14 Wanted less hours	
15 Wanted to make more use of skills	
16 Wanted a job with less stress/pressure	
17 Contract/Casual work ending	
18 Job security/seeking more permanent work	
19 Other reasons	

Similarly, if users want to add multiple data items to a table they should ensure that these data items are applicable to the same population group.

For more information about data items and applicable populations, users should refer to the PJSM TableBuilder Data Items List available from the downloads tab.

Cross-tabulating Data items on the same level

Cross-tabulating data from the Person Level with other data items from the same level will produce data about people. For example, cross-tabulating the geographic variable 'State or territory of usual residence' by the 'Hours usually worked in main job' produces a table showing the number of people in each region by the hours that they usually work each week in their main job.

MULTI-RESPONSE DATA ITEMS

A number of the survey's data items allow respondents to report more than one response. These are referred to as 'multi-response data items'. An example of such a data item is pictured below. For this data item respondents can report all the difficulties they had in finding work.

Participation

- All reasons for not actively looking for work [3]
- All reasons not available to start work within four weeks [10]
 - ☐ Own short-term illness or injury
 - ☐ Own long-term health condition or disability
 - ☐ Pregnancy
 - ☐ Studying or returning to studies
 - ☐ Moved house or holidays
 - ☐ Caring for ill or elderly person/family member
 - ☐ Childcare
 - ☐ On a job-related training program
 - ☐ Problems with access to transport
 - ☐ Other reasons

When a multi-response data item is tabulated, a person is counted against each response they have provided (e.g. a person who responds 'Studying or returning to studies' and 'Caring for ill or elderly person/family member' and 'Problems with access to transport' will be counted once in each of these three categories).

As a result, each person in the appropriate population is counted at least once, and some persons are

counted multiple times. Therefore, the total for a multi-response data item will be less than or equal to the sum of its components.

For more information on definitions and concepts that apply to the data items in this file, please refer to Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia (cat. no. 6226.0) and Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0).

Conditions of Use

CONDITIONS OF USE

USER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Census and Statistics Act 1905 includes a legislative guarantee to respondents that their confidentiality will be protected. This is fundamental to the trust the Australian public has in the ABS, and that trust is in turn fundamental to the excellent quality of ABS information. Without that trust, survey respondents may be less forthcoming or truthful in answering our questionnaires. For more information, see 'Avoiding inadvertent disclosure' and 'Microdata' on our web page [How the ABS keeps your information confidential](#).

The release of microdata must satisfy the ABS legislative obligation to release information in a manner that is not likely to enable the identification of a particular person or organisation. Therefore, in accordance with the Census and Statistics Act, a confidentiality process is applied to the data in TableBuilder to avoid releasing information that may lead to the identification of individuals, families, households, dwellings or businesses.

Prior to being granted access to TableBuilder users must agree to the following ABS Terms and Conditions of TableBuilder Access.

The TableBuilder User Guide provides additional information to assist users.

CONDITIONS OF SALE

All ABS products and services are provided subject to the ABS Conditions of Sale. Any queries relating to these Conditions of Sale should be emailed to intermediary.management@abs.gov.au.

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

The ABS/Universities Australia Agreement provides participating universities with access to a range of ABS products and services. This includes access to microdata. For further information, university clients should refer to the [ABS/Universities Australia Agreement web page](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Microdata Entry Page contains links to microdata related information to assist users in understanding and accessing microdata. For further information users should email microdata.access@abs.gov.au or telephone (02) 6252 7714.

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About this Release

This microdata release will inform on the following broad labour market issues -

Labour force participation potential, underemployment and marginal attachment, as well as job search experience and labour mobility.

This information can be cross classified by characteristics such as duration of job search, last job details, hours worked, industry and occupation as well as personal characteristics.

Explanatory Notes

Quality Declaration

QUALITY DECLARATION - SUMMARY

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

For information on the institutional environment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, please see ABS Institutional Environment.

RELEVANCE

The Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJSM) survey presents information about participation, underemployment, marginal attachment, job mobility and job search. The collection of a range of socio-demographic and labour force characteristics makes the datasets produced from the survey extremely valuable for comparing and analysing a person's experience relating to job search, job change and increasing participation, all of which can be cross classified by other employment characteristics such as hours worked, industry, occupation and sector of job as well as personal characteristics.

TIMELINESS

The Participation, Job Search and Mobility survey is conducted annually in February as a supplement to the ABS monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS). Results from this survey are released in the publication Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia (cat. no. 6226.0).

ACCURACY

The microdata generally contains finer levels of detail for data items than what is otherwise published in other formats, for example, in Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia (cat. no. 6226.0). For information on the level of detail provided, please refer to the data item list in the Downloads tab.

Steps to confidentialise the data made available in TableBuilder are taken in such a way as to maximise the usefulness of the content while maintaining the confidentiality of respondents selected in the survey. As a result, it may not be possible to exactly reconcile all the statistics produced from TableBuilder with other published statistics. Further information about the steps taken to confidentialise the microdata is available through the Survey Confidentiality Page.

COHERENCE

The ABS seeks to maximise consistency and comparability over time by minimising changes to its surveys. However, sound survey practice requires ongoing development and maintenance to maintain the integrity of the data and the efficiency of collection. For changes between iterations of the survey, please refer to the Comparability of Time Series section in the Explanatory Notes of Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia (cat. no. 6226.0)

Caution should be exercised when comparing the estimates from this TableBuilder, with previous surveys as some data items have changed and populations may be conceptually different.

For more information on the history of changes to Persons Not In the Labour Force, see the Explanatory Notes (cat. no. 6220.0).

For more information on the history of changes to Underemployed Workers, see the Explanatory Notes (cat. no. 6265.0).

For more information on the history of changes to Job Search Experience, see the Explanatory Notes (cat. no. 6222.0).

For more information on the history of changes to Labour Mobility, see the Explanatory Notes (cat. no. 6209.0).

INTERPRETABILITY

Detailed information on the terminology, classifications and other technical aspects associated with the Participation, Job Search and Mobility survey can be found in the relevant web pages included with this release.

Further commentary is often available through articles and data published in other ABS products, including:

- Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).
- Participation, Job Search and Mobility (cat. no. 6226.0)

DATA ACCESS

For more detailed information on the products and services available for this survey refer to the Introduction page.

Microdata products are available to approved users. See How to apply to register.

A full list of available microdata can be viewed via the List of expected and available Microdata.

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